



From the desk of the Registered Dietitian: *Rachel Robinson, RD, Chief Clinical Dietitian*

## Weight Maintenance

Weight maintenance can become a struggle with age. Some people put on unwanted pounds gradually each year, while others can't seem to keep the pounds on due to decreased appetite or medical conditions. Whether it's a healthy food or an unhealthy one, everything you eat contains calories. Weight maintenance is all about calorie balance. To remain in balance and maintain your weight, the calories consumed from foods and drinks must be balanced by the calories you use in body functions, daily activities, and exercise. To gain weight, you should consume more calories each day. To lose weight, you should consume fewer calories.

### If your goal is to lose weight:

- *Reduce calories*- This can sometimes be easier said than done, but sometimes there are easy ways, like swapping out an oversized portion of meat or grains for veggies.
- *Increase exercise*- Start slow and work up to at least 30 minutes per day.
- *Eat more fruits and vegetables*- Fruits and vegetables are low in calories but packed with nutritious vitamins and minerals. They are also high in fiber, which keeps you feeling fuller longer. Eat a variety of colors and try to include them at every meal!
- *Don't drink your calories*- A 20 oz soda contains about 200 calories, which would take a 150 pound adult an hour on the treadmill to burn off. Stick with water instead.
- *Simple swaps add up*- Daily things like cutting back on cream in your coffee can add up.
- *Eat mindfully*- Resist the temptation to snack straight out of the package as that can make it difficult to control your portion sizes. Try to eat off of smaller bowls and plates.
- *Watch your portion sizes*- This is especially true for high calorie foods and desserts.
- *Drink plenty of water*- Water contains no calories, so drinking more will not impact your weight. In fact, sometimes when we think we are hungry, we are actually thirsty.

### If your goal is to gain weight:

- *Drink your calories*- Enjoy a glass of milk or a smoothie for extra calories and protein. Some people prefer pre-made drinks like Ensure, Boost, or Carnation Instant Breakfast. Be sure to drink these away from mealtime to avoid filling up on drinks and leaving no room for food. Some people enjoy sipping on these drinks between meals as a snack.
- *Eat smaller but more frequent meals and snacks*- If your appetite is poor, a large meal can be overwhelming. Instead, enjoy snacks between meals to boost your intake.
- *Add protein powder to food and drinks*- Add a scoop of flavored or unflavored protein powder to hot cereal, pudding, baked goods or smoothies.
- *Make snacking easy*- If your energy is low, keep simple high calorie snacks nearby like nuts or nut butter and crackers so you can eat when the urge strikes.

